



Public Health

Seattle & King County

HEALTHY PEOPLE. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.

Dorothy F. Teeter, MHA, Interim Director and Health Officer

Public Health Reserve Corps Launched *Medical and Support Volunteers Wanted!*



In major disasters and epidemics, public health is at the heart of the response, activating emergency operations to limit injury, illness, suffering, and death.

Public Health – Seattle & King County is establishing the Public Health Reserve Corps to deploy when disaster impacts our own communities. The Public Health Reserve Corps is a group of volunteers prescreened and trained to augment Public Health staff during an emergency in King County. When every minute counts, the Public Health Reserve Corps will play a major role with:

- Dispensing medications and vaccinations
- Conducting health assessments
- Disease surveillance

Right now, the Public Health Reserve Corps is particularly in need of the following specializations:

- Pharmacists and Pharmacy technicians
- Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners
- Registered Nurses
- Licensed Practical Nurses
- Physicians
- Support volunteers

To apply, go to:

<http://agency.governmentjobs.com/kinghealthrc>

1. What will I be doing as a volunteer?

Volunteer roles will vary, depending on the emergency and what staffing needs exist. Medical volunteer roles may include:

- Dispensing antibiotics
- Injecting vaccines
- Reviewing health histories



Public Health Reserve Corps

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City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor



King County

Ron Sims, Executive

Support volunteers play an integral role in emergency scenarios and interacting with the public. Support volunteer roles may include:

- Assisting people with paperwork
- Greeting and directing people through a medication center
- Providing information about a disease or condition to people
- Managing the flow of people through a medication center
- Providing interpretation services

2. What will I be doing as a volunteer?

Qualified medical volunteers include the following professionals licensed in Washington State:

- Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians
- Advanced registered nurse practitioners
- Registered Nurses
- Licensed Practical Nurses
- Physicians

Medical Volunteer Position Description:

<http://agency.governmentjobs.com/kinghealthrc/default.cfm?action=agencyspecs>

3. Who can become a support volunteer?

Anyone who is 18 years old or older, works well in stressful situations, has good customer service skills, and works well in a team.

Volunteer Position Description:

<http://agency.governmentjobs.com/kinghealthrc/default.cfm?action=agencyspecs>

4. What type of emergencies would I be responding to?



The Public Health Reserve Corps serves response activities by Public Health Seattle & King County in an emergency. Currently, volunteers in the program will be focused on specific Public Health response functions.

One example of a local Public Health emergency response is the preparations we made for Hurricane Katrina evacuees in 2005. Anticipating the arrival of potentially thousands displaced from the storm, some in poor health, Public Health developed a model and protocol for screening people once their flights landed. Ultimately, no

planes arrived, but volunteer physicians, nurse practitioners, and registered nurses were recruited in anticipation of needing their screening assistance.

Another example of a type of emergency in which the Public Health Reserve Corps may assist is when rapid immunizations are needed for a large number of people in the community, such as for a widespread Hepatitis A exposure.

The Public Health Reserve Corps may also assist during a bioterrorist event, specifically an anthrax exposure. Public Health would be responsible for dispensing antibiotics within 72 hours of exposure and would need volunteers to help dispense antibiotics from designated medication centers to exposed residents.

5. What happens if I'm needed by my employer during an emergency?

First and foremost, Public Health understands that your first commitment is to your employer. In a large emergency in which the health care system is impacted, your responsibilities are with your employer.

However, many type of events in which the Public Health Reserve Corps would assist will be of a smaller scale and may not have a significant impact on the larger health care system. In many instances, early response to these types of emergencies by Public Health will help the larger health care system from being overwhelmed.

6. Can medical, nursing, or public health students volunteer?

Students are encouraged to apply as a support volunteer. If students have an active professional license, they can apply as a medical volunteer.

7. Can medical residents and interns be a medical volunteer?

Yes. Medical residents and interns will work under the supervision of Public Health – Seattle & King County's Medical Director or Chief of Pharmacy.

8. Can retired medical professionals volunteer?

Yes. Retired medical professionals are valuable assets and are encouraged to apply. If they do not have an active professional license, they can apply as a support volunteer. If they have an active professional license, they can apply as a medical volunteer.

9. How do I become a Public Health Reserve Corps volunteer?

1. All interested individuals complete a short volunteer application. On-line applications are preferred. For a paper application, contact: _____.
2. After receiving the application, Public Health – Seattle & King County will:
 - Review the application materials
 - Conduct a professional license check (for medical volunteer applicants)
 - Conduct a criminal background check

3. The PH Reserve Corps program manager will briefly meet with the volunteer applicant. This can be done in person or over the phone. The applicant will have the opportunity to ask questions about the volunteer position and to discuss whether the PH Reserve Corps is an appropriate fit.
4. Public Health – Seattle & King County will contact the references provided on the application to verify the applicant's qualifications and suitability for volunteering with the PH Reserve Corps.

The goal of this process is to ensure that:

- Volunteers have clear expectations of the volunteer positions, and thus a rewarding experience.
- Volunteers and the public are protected through a quality assurance screening procedure.

10. How much time is required to volunteer?

Volunteers devote 8 hours per year in the Public Health Reserve Corps for orientation, drills and training. Professional continuing education credits will be offered whenever possible during these 8 hours. Time spent volunteering during an emergency will vary depending on the scenario and volunteer availability.

11. What type of training do volunteers receive?

Volunteers receive training appropriate to their roles in an emergency. Topics include Incident Command Structure, Medication/Vaccination Center system, as well as role specific trainings like, for example, dispensing antibiotics for anthrax or using communication radios. Additionally, volunteers participate in drills such as Public Health – Seattle & King County's recent mass antibiotic dispensing drill and mass flu vaccination clinic drill.

Professional continuing education credits are offered whenever possible.

12. What type of liability protection is provided to volunteers?

Volunteers receive liability protection and compensation for injury or death through the State of Washington's Emergency Worker Program during State approved training events and emergency missions.

- For liability protection description, see [RCW 38.52.180\(2\)](#)
- For compensation for injury or death description, see RCW [38.52.260](#), [.290](#), [.340](#), and [.190](#).
- Washington State rules governing the Emergency Worker Program are contained in Chapter [118-04 WAC](#)

For more information: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=118-04>.

13. Are Public Health Reserve Corps volunteers paid?

Volunteer time is uncompensated from King County.

14. What other Medical Reserve Corps Units are in Washington State?

The Public Health Reserve Corps is just one of the Medical Reserve Corps programs in Washington State. To learn more about other MRCs, go to:

www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=56